

Message Text

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 THE HA 00933 211131Z

43

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-11 ISO-00 DEAE-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 JUSE-00

NSAE-00 SNM-02 TRSE-00 USIA-06 NSC-05 OES-03 OMB-01

IGA-02 SS-15 HEW-02 DODE-00 AID-05 L-03 PA-01 PRS-01

/077 W

----- 068553

R 201659Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7619

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USMISSION GENEVA

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE THE HAGUE 0933

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SNAR, NL

SUBJ: DUTCH PARLIAMENT SCHEDULES DEBATE ON DRUG BILL

REF: 75 THE HAGUE 2577; THE HAGUE 5843

1. SUMMARY: THE DATES HAVE NOW BEEN SET FOR DEBATE AND VOTE ON A NEW NARCOTICS LAW FOR THE NETHERLANDS. THE SECOND CHAMBER WILL DISCUSS THE BILL FEB 25-26. THE VOTE WILL BE MARCH 2. WE EXPECT PASSAGE OF THE LEGISLATION WITHOUT MAJOR AMENDMENT. END SUMMARY.

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 THE HA 00933 211131Z

2. THE SECOND CHAMBER OF PARLIAMENT WILL DEBATE THE GOVERNMENTS

BILL ON DRUG POLICY FEB 25-26. THE VOTE ON THE BILL IS SCHEDULED FOR MARCH 2.

3. THE CHAIRMAN OF THE CHAMBER COMMITTEE THAT CONSIDERED THE LEGISLATION, MRS. VEDER-SMIT, TOLD US FEB 19 THAT SHE EXPECTS NO OPPOSITION TO THE SECTIONS IMPOSING HARSHER PENALTIES ON OPIATES BUT IS NOT CERTAIN HOW THE VOTE WILL GO ON THE SECTION REDUCING PENALTIES ON CANNABIS. (THE BILL WOULD RAISE THE MAXIMUM PENALTY FOR INTERNATIONAL TRAFFICKING IN HARD DRUGS FROM FOUR TO 12 YEARS AND FOR NATIONAL TRAFFICKING IN HARD DRUGS FROM FOUR TO EIGHT YEARS. ON THE OTHER HAND, WHILE RETAINING THE FOUR YEAR MAXIMUM FOR TRAFFICKING IN HEMP PRODUCTS, IT WOULD REDUCE THE PENALTY FOR POSSESSING HEMP PRODUCTS FROM SKOUR TO TWO YEARS AND MAKE POSSESSION FOR PERSONAL USE OF UNDER 30 GRAMS A NON CRIMINAL OFFENSE PUNISHABLE ONLY BY A MAXIMUM FINE OF 500 GULDERS -- ONE GUILDER EQUALS ABOUT 38 US CENTS -- OR ONE MONTH IMPRISONMENT.)

4. THERE ARE THREE MAJOR PARLIAMENTARY CURRENTS OF OPINION ON CANNABIS. ON THE LEFT, SOME MEMBERS OF THE LABOR AND OTHER PROGRESSIVE PARTIES FAVOR THE COMPLETE LEGALIZATION OF CANNABIS, FOR POSSESSION, USE AND TRAFFICKING. THEY PROPOSE TO OFFER AN AMENDMENT TO THIS EFFECT DURING THE DEBATE NEXT WEEK. ON THE RIGHT, THERE ARE MEMBERS OF THE LIBERAL AND CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTIES WHO FAVOR RETAINING THE CURRENT FOUR YEAR PRISON SENTENCE. BETWEEN THESE TWO POSITIONS IS THE GOVERNMENT, WHICH HOLDS THAT THE USE AND POSSESSION OF CANNABIS SHOULD NO LONGER BE SUBJECT TO PENAL LAW BUT WHICH RECOGNIZES THAT THE NETHERLANDS OBLIGATIONS AS A PARTY TO THE SINGLE CONVENTION MAKE LEGALIZATION OF USE IMPOSSIBLE RIGHT NOW. MINISTERS VORRINK (HEALTH) AND VAN AGT (JUSTICE) HAVE PROPOSED THAT THE CONVENTION BE AMENDED TO PERMIT PERSONAL USE OF CANNABIS PROVIDED THAT STATES STRIVE TO PREVENT DISTRIBUTION AND PROHIBIT EXPORT AND PRODUCTION FOR ILLEGAL USE IN OTHER COUNTRIES. WHILE PURSUING AMENDMENT OF THE CONVENTION, THE GOVERNMENT IS PROPOSING THE SHARP REDUCTION OF PENAL SANCTIONS FOR POSSESSION FOR PERSONAL USE MENTIONED IN PARA 3 ABOVE.

5. ALTHOUGH MRS. VEDER IS HEAD OF THE COMMITTEE THAT HAS BEEN CONSIDERING THE BILL, SHE IS NOT A MEMBER OF ONE OF THE GOVERNMENT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 03 THE HA 00933 211131Z

MENT COALITION PARTIES BUT RATHER OF THE OPPOSITION LIBERALS. SHE IS NOT BOUND TO SUPPORT THE BILL, AND CAN OFFER AMENDMENTS OF HER OWN FROM THE FLOOR OF THE CHAMBER. (IT IS NOT COMMON PRACTICE FOR PARLIAMENT TO ORIGINATE BILLS.) MRS. VEDER TOLD US THAT SHE WOULD PREFER TO HAVE THE PRESENT LAW REMAIN UNCHANGED THAN SEE CANNABIS DECRIMINALIZED. HER WORST FEAR IS THAT A MAJORITY WILL VOTE FOR THE LEFT WING POSITION ON LEGALIZATION.

6. SENSING THAT SHE MIGHT FIND BACKING FOR HER OPPOSITION TO DECRIMINILIZATION, MRS. VEDER LED A GROUPD OF EIGHT DRUG COMMITTEE MEMBERS (ONE FROM EACH PARTY ON THE COMMITTEE) TO STOCKHOLM FEB 1-12. AS SHE EXPECTED, GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS THERE, INCLUDING HEALTH MINISTER ASPLING, WERE HARSHLY CRITICAL OF THE DUTCH GOVERNMENTS PROPOSAL TO REDUCE THE PENALTIES FOR PERSONAL USE OF CANNABIS, BECAUSE THEY ANTICIPATE THAT THE NETHERLANDS WOULD BECOME EVEN MORE OF A MAGNET FOR TRAFFICKERS AND USERS OF ALL KINDS OF DRUGS AND THAT THIS WOULD FACILITATE THE INTERNATIONAL FLOW OF CANNABIS. THE SWEDISH MESSAGE APPARENTLY CHANGED THE MIND OF SOME MEMBERS OF THE GROUP. IN AN EFFORT TO BUY TIME FOR THIER CONVERSION TO PERSUADE OTHER MEMBERS, MRS. VEDER SOUGHT A TWO WEEK POSTPONEMENT OF THE DEBATE. SHE WAS REBUFFED BY THE SECOND CHAMBERS CHAIRMAN, LABOR MEMBER VONDELING. SINCE THE NEW FOUND OPPOSITION BY SOME OF THE TRAVELERS TO SWEDEN HAD ALREADY STARTED TO CRUMBLE UNDER DOMESTIC POLITIAL PRESSURES AFTER THEY RETURNED, THE FAILURE TO OBTAIN A POSTPONEMENT MAY NOT MATTER.

7. ASSESSMENT: WE EXPECT THAT THE GOVERNMENT WILL SUCCEED IN OBTAINING PASSAGE OF THE BILL WITHOUT MAJOR AMENDMENT. THER IS VIRTUAL UNANIMITY IN FAVOR OF STRENGTHENING THE PROVISIONS DEAL-ING WITH HARD DRUGS. ALTHOUGH OPINION IS DIVIDED ON REDUCING THE PENALTIES FOR POSSESSION OF CANNABISL FOR PERSONAL USE, THE ODDS FAVOR THE GOVERNMENTS POSITION RATHER THAN EITHR EXTREME. ASSUMING THAT THE BILL PASSES ON MARCH 2, THE NEXT STAGE WILL BE CONSIDERATION BY THE FIRST CHAMBER WITHIN ABOUT TWO MONTHS. THIS IS USUALLY PRO FORMA. THE LAW WOULD TAKE EFFECT WHEN BOTH THE QUEEN AND THE RESPONSIBLE MINISTERS SIGN THE BILL. WE ARE IN SIGHT, THEREFORE, OF ONE OF OUR MAJOR POLICY GOALS IN THE NETHERLANDS - THE ADOPTION OF LEGISLATION TO MAKE POSSIBLE MORE EFFECTIVE ENFORCEMENT AND MORE STRINGENT PUNISHMENT OF NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING.

BROWN
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 04 THE HA 00933 211131Z

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DRUG CONTROL, LAW, LEGISLATIVE BILLS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 20 FEB 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976THEHA00933
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760066-0235
From: THE HAGUE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760228/aaaaaydd.tel
Line Count: 154
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 THE HAGUE 2577, 76 THE HAGUE 5843
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 30 MAR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <30 MAR 2004 by ElyME>; APPROVED <31 MAR 2004 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: DUTCH PARLIAMENT SCHEDULES DEBATE ON DRUG BILL
TAGS: SNAR, NL
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006